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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 002606

SIPDIS

FOR INL A/S BEERS AND AF A/S KANSTEINIER
FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/12/2011

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING ASSISTANCE TO NIGERIA

REF: A) ABUJA 2568 B) ABUJA 2560

1.(U) Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter for reasons
1.5 (b) and (d).

2.(C) The September 11 attacks on the U.S. have focused added attention on the inadequate money laundering controls in Nigeria. I have made this a top priority in my recent meetings with President Obasanjo (ref a), the Vice President and several advisors and ministers responsible for security and law enforcement issues. The good news is that all of these officials recognize the deficiencies and the attendant security threat presented by money laundering by terrorists and organized crime groups. Nigeria is particularly vulnerable to money laundering given its economy's enormous cash liquidity derived from oil revenues. The President has pledged full cooperation and is moving ahead with both new legislation to improve the existing but inadequate money laundering law and he is creating a "Financial Crimes Commission" that would provide a much needed centralized coordinating body for GON-wide anti-money laundering efforts and a "financial intelligence unit" as call for by the FATF.

3.(C) I ask that Nigeria be given priority in dispatching USG money laundering experts to provide assistance to foreign governments. As you know, Nigeria has been declared a "non-cooperating country or territory (NCCT)" by the FATF -- a step predating September 11. INL has made clear its commitment to assisting the GON in improving money laundering controls by the obligations of INC funds (\$125,000) for this purposed in the FY2000 Letter of Agreement -- also predating the current crisis.

4.(C) I understand that INL is probably beseiged with similar requests for assistance. Yet, we risk losing a rare window of opportunity if we do not respond with assistance within the next two to three months. The Ministry of Justice is already reviewing the existing money laundering law and beginning to draft revisions. It is also drawing up the design for the Financial Crimes Commission (FCC). If we could provide TDY money laundering advisors to Nigeria in the near-term, we would stand to make a lasting impact on the GON's money laundering control regime. If we wait longer, we could miss the current momentum with the GON, for which we are partly responsible. The law will have been amended and the FCC created without our input.

5.(U) Please let me know if we can extend assistance to the GON on this important law enforcement and security front in the immediate future.

6.(U) On a separate issue, we are proposing mid-November as the time frame for the Washington meeting of the Bilateral Law Enforcement Committee. I am seeing the Attorney General (who would lead the GON delegation) on October 16 and I would like to propose this time frame for his consideration. Please let me know if these dates suit your schedule. We plan to send you a meaningful agenda for the Committee meeting shortly.
Jeter